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MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT.

RICHMOND, VA., Feb. 8, 1864.

To the House of Representatives:

I herewith transmit a communication from the Secretary of War, in response to your resolution of the 15th ult., requesting to be informed "by what authority Gens. Sam Jones and Imboden have prohibited the transportation of food from the military districts in which they are located. to the city of Richmond, for private use and con-consumption.

JEFFERSON DAVIS.

COMMUNICATION FROM SECRETARY OF WAR

CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA,
War Department,
Richmond, Feb. 4, 1864.

To the President of the Confederate States:

SIR: I have received a resolution of the House of Representatives, requesting to be informed "by what authority Generals Sam Jones and Imboden have prohibited the transportation of food from the military districts in which they are located, to the city of Richmond, for private use and consumption."

In reply, I have the honor to transmit herewith reports from the two generals named, responsive to the resolution of the House.

Very respectfully, your ob't serv't,

JAMES A. SEDDON,
Secretary of War.

HEADQUARTERS C. S. FORCES, NEAR MOUNT JACKSON, VA., *January 30th*, 1864.

Gen. S. COOPER, *A. and I. G., Richmond, Va.:*

GENERAL: Absence on leave from my command has delayed a response to the resolution of the House of Representatives, calling for information in regard to the authority under which I acted, in prohibiting, by Special Orders, No. 78, Headquarters Valley District, November 28, 1863, the removal of supplies from the district then under my command. I beg leave now, respectfully, to submit:

1st. The order itself, a copy of which please find enclosed, which shows that the prohibition was not general, and was only enforced to an extent, deemed by me, from a full knowledge of the wants of the army, absolutely necessary to prevent great suffering in my own command, and others dependent in a large degree upon the products of this rich district for their supplies. The reasons for the order are stated on its face.

2d. The authority under which I acted, I conceive, was conferred by act of Congress and the general orders from the Adjutant and Inspector General's office, of March 19th and November 6th, 1863, authorizing and regulating impressments. Nothing but the most imperative necessity could have induced me to make the order which I knew would evoke strong opposition, and, perhaps, denunciation, from those whose money-making operations it would interfere with; but, when gaunt want began to stare my unsheltered, patient and faithful soldiers in the face—men who have not had ten days rest, at any one time, since April, 1863, nor even a hut to shelter them during all the cold of this winter—I thought a case of that imperative necessity had arisen for the relief of which the impressment law was enacted; and I did not hesitate to execute the authority I believed I possessed. Under the operation of my order our immediate necessities were relieved, though a number of speculators failed to realize their anticipated gains; and, having broken up speculation in provisions, I on the 24th of December, 1863, so modified the order as not to require a permit for the removal from the district of supplies purchased, *bona fide*, for private consumption, and not for sale or speculation.

In conclusion, permit me to say that, without a resort to impressment, it is not possible for me to procure indispensable supplies for my own small command, at the authorized schedule prices, though I know such supplies are in almost every part of the district, in sufficient quantity to be spared for our support, without seriously inconveniencing, and certainly without distressing, the people. But the holders, especially if speculators—and their name is legion—will not sell at Government prices, if they can find a purchaser willing to pay more. I must, therefore, either impress subsistence, or see my men suffer for bread and meat. I have no doubt, when this alternative is presented, I have the authority, and it is my duty, to impress. My order, therefore, remains in force against all speculators as therein defined, and

will not be revoked as to them, as long as the necessity exists, which caused its publication, unless its revocation is ordered by my military superiors, or the authority to enforce it is abrogated by law.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant.

J. D. IMBODEN,

Brigadier General commanding.

HEADQUARTERS VALLEY DISTRICT,
Linville's Creek, Nov. 28, 1863.

SPECIAL ORDERS, No. 78.

It having been represented to the general commanding, that the officers and agents of the subsistence department of this district, are unable to procure the supplies imperatively required for the army, by purchase, because speculators are in the market paying higher prices than those fixed by the Government commissioners, and sending such supplies out of the district, to be sold again, it is ordered that the commissaries of subsistence, at New Market, Harrisonburg, Staunton and Lexington, and those on duty with the command in the field, do impress, for the use of the army, all the necessaries of subsistence found in the hands of speculators, or which have been sold to speculators, though not delivered, to be sent out of the district; and by the term speculator is meant any one who buys to sell again; and any one in this military district making alleged purchases for private consumption, or for the use of the poor or soldiers families in other districts, for the use of railroad employees, or Government contractors: will not be permitted to remove supplies from this district, except by special orders from these headquarters, or from the War Department; and the commissary officers and agents, named in this order, will see that no such purchases are carried into effect by the contracting parties.

This order is not intended to apply to necessaries in the hands of producers, in transitu to market, which have not been sold or engaged to be sold before or on their arrival at market.

By command of

Brig. Gen. JOHN D. IMBODEN,
Commanding.

G. W. MCPHAIL, *Lieutenant and A. D. C.*

HEADQUARTERS, DEPARTMENT WESTERN VIRGINIA,
Dublin, January 26, 1864,

GENERAL: I have received your letter of the 20th instant, enclosing the following resolution adopted by the House of Representatives, on the 15th instant, viz:

"*Resolved*, That the Secretary of War be requested to inform this House, by what authority Generals Sam Jones and Imboden have prohibited the transportation of food from the military districts in which they are located to the City of Richmond, for private use and consumption.

"Very respectfully,

"A. R. LAMAR, *Clerk*."

"Official: JOHN WITHERS,

"*Lieut. Col. and Assistant Adjutant General.*

"*A. & I. G.'s Office, January* 19, 1864."

You direct me to forward the report required.

In reply, I have the honor to state that I have never prohibited the transportation of food from this military department to the city of Richmond for private use and consumption. On the contrary, I have given all the aid in my power to facilitate the transportation of food for purposes specified in the resolution.

I have endeavored to prevent speculators and extortioners, whose chief aims in life seem to be to keep out of military service and enrich themselves by preying upon the necessities of better men, from stripping the department of the food necessary for the support of the army. To that end, I have addressed letters to Thomas H. Ellis, President James River and Kanawha Canal, and R. L. Owens, President Virginia & Tennessee Railroad; extracts from which, together with Mr. Owens' advertisement in a Lynchburg paper, are herewith forwarded, marked A, B and C.

Very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
SAM. JONES,
Major General.

General S. COOPER,
Adj't and Insp'r General, C. S. A., Richmond, Va.

[A]

Extract.

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT, W. VIRGINIA AND E. TENNESSEE,
Dublin, November 7, 1863.

SIR:

* * * * * * * * *

I have no desire whatever to diminish the usefulness or revenue of

the company of which you are President. I only desire that it shall be used to the best interest of Government and community, and shall not be used by speculators and extortioners to transport provisions out of the department, to gratify their own inordinate avarice and embarrass this department by withdrawing from it the supplies needed for the troops. I do not wish to interfere in the slightest degree with the transportation of such supplies as are intended in good faith for domestic use.

You and the directors of the company are certainly as much interested as I am in the successful termination of the struggle in which we are engaged, and you are much better qualified than I am to manage the affairs of your company, and I prefer leaving the matter in your hands with the single and earnest request that our worst enemies, the speculators and extortioners in the necessaries of life shall not use your canal to drain this department and fill their own pockets.

* * * * * * * * * *

Very respectfully, &c., &c.

SAM. JONES,
Major General.

THOMAS H. ELLIS, ESQ.,
President James River and Kanawha Canal.

Official:

CHARLES STRINGFELLOW,
Assistant Adjutant General.

[B]

Extract.

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT W. VIRGINIA AND E. TENNESSEE,
Dublin, November 14, 1863.

R. L. OWEN, ESQ.,
President Virginia and Tennessee Railroad:

SIR: Some two weeks since I addressed you a letter in regard to the transportation of supplies from this department over the Virginia and Tennessee railroad, and am indebted to you for your prompt attention to my request. I was induced to do so because I heard that the speculators were purchasing and transporting supplies out of this department. The only object I had in view was to protect the army and Government by preventing those harpies, the speculators and extortioners, from stripping the department of subsistence. I had no intention whatever of interfering with the ordinary transportation of freight within this department, or the transportation out of it of such supplies as were intended in good faith for the domestic consumption of the parties purchasing. I have received applications from persons asking to be permitted to transport provision from one

point in the department to another, from which I infer that there is some misunderstanding as to my wishes.

I would much prefer that you should manage all such matters yourself. Indeed, it is with great reluctance that I ask you to place any restriction whatever on the transportation of supplies by your road. I am sure that we both have the same object in view, that is, that the road shall be used to the best advantage for the interests of the stockholders and the community, consistent with the requirements of the army and the efficient working of the Government. If you will aid me in the accomplishment of these objects I will most gladly remove all restrictions and leave the entire management of the road to you, who, I am sure, are much better qualified to manage it than I am.

* * * * * * * * *

Very respectfully, &c , &c.

SAM. JONES,
Major General.

Official:

CHARLES STRINGFELLOW,
Assistant Adjutant General.

[C]

PRESIDENT'S OFFICE, VIRGINIA AND TENNESSEE RAILROAD,
Lynchburg, November 17, 1863.

I understand there are parties in the southwestern counties of this State buying subsistence supplies and claiming to be agents of the company, and thereby imposing upon the community. I, therefore, give notice that D. W. Kyle, Manager of Supplies, Robert Mitchell, Wood Agent, and W. S. Minor, Agent at Bristol, are the only parties authorized to purchase such supplies for this company. The restrictions placed by the military authorities upon shipments of articles of subsistence are intended only to apply to speculators, who otherwise would strip the department of the subsistence necessary for the army there, and no restrictions upon shipments within the western department, which extends from Liberty west, nor upon shipments east of Liberty, when intended for private consumption. Any party desiring transportation for articles for the consumption of his family, and coming east of Liberty, can always obtain it by application to the office of T. D. Jellis, Agent of Transportation at Lynchburg.

ROBERT L. OWEN,
President.

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT WEST VIRGINIA,
January 26, 1864.

Forwarded with my letter of this date to the Adjutant and Inspector General.

SAM. JONES,
Major General.

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